

# *El Presidio News*

Sept-Dec 2004

Volume V, Issue 3

## ***MEYER COURT INFILL PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED***

EPNA Myer-Court Infill Committee wishes to acknowledge the successful completion of the partnership between our neighborhood and the City of Tucson. The partnership endured through more than five years of sustained effort which saw a dusty lot be transformed into five row house owner-occupied homes. Four of these are low to moderate income homes with the fifth sold at the market rate. An additional lot, on the southeast corner awaits it's plans review for a home to be built by/for Todd Mazur. We now can give a warm welcome our new neighbors Kathy Martin, Desiree Roose, Maria Cecelia Boyad, Eric Christianson, Ruth Williams and Todd Mazur, who now join us in celebrating living in the urban core.

We congratulate the City on "staying the course" in completing not only the houses, but the looping of Meyer and Court streets and for the closing of access to 6th Street. The infrastructure improvements have enabled a much more residential character to take hold on the northeast portion of our neighborhood.

The looping of the roadway and the construction of the sound wall, foreseen as part of the Barraza-Aviation planning to mitigate increasing traffic impact upon the neighborhood, was advanced by five to ten years beyond the likely timeframe for any possible major road work. Additionally, the request to bury the power lines, originally made and rejected as part of this project, were completed by Tucson Electric Power (TEP) in a surprise reversal of their original decision and then extended part way south along Meyer, as well as for Main and part

of Franklin Streets. TEP and the City worked extensively with the EPNA leadership to effect this very positive outcome (and, not surprisingly, more burying remains to be done).

The residential infill work would not have been possible without the dedicated effort and countless hours by committee members, Chris Carroll, Margaret Hardy, Alex Oberlick, Dan Overbeck, JoAnne Rogers, Ilya Sloan, and Joyce Tracy. We would especially like to thank the City staff in general, but particularly to recognize Karen Thoreson, Joe Comella, Kim McKay, Jim Glock and Marty McCune without whom this project would not have survived the various tests placed before it. We would also like to thank Professor Corky Poster and (then) students Lauren Watson, Ruth Tower and Don Durban for the work done under the grant awarded by the Drachman Institute (after the 2nd try!). Their work with the Infill Committee resulted in the El Presidio Infill Planning and Design Project that was completed in May, 1999. This study identified all the empty lots in the neighborhood, the constraints and potential for development as residential infill and was used immediately to help close the commitment by Community Services to work with us on the number one lot which was identified -- Meyer and Court.

Clearly this is but the first of many efforts of turning dusty lots into the houses needed to encourage the return of people to live downtown. We are highly encouraged by the current efforts of private developer, Michael Keith, on the

(continued on page 2)

(MeyerCourt Infill continued)

Franklin-Court development and of the proposed development of Lot 7. These and the other remaining open lots have the potential to return El Presidio to the full vibrancy that it once knew and to which it has long aspired to return.

We hope that everyone enjoyed the celebration at the Infill Block Party Celebration held in November, and want to thank Joanne Rogers for chairing this lovely “welcoming” event and the other volunteers and neighbors who pitched in to make it a warm success: Mary Lucking and Steve Martin, David Hoyt-Johnson, Ilya Sloan, Eric Christianson, Chris Carroll, Alex Oberlick, Bob Freitas, Joyce Tracy, and the numerous other helping hands who pitched in with the set-up and clean-up. The company was the best!

Best wishes, Bob Freitas, Meyer-Court Infill Committee Chair.

**Hurray!**

**El Presidio Historic District Street Signage Project is near completion.**

Keep a look out in the next several months for El Presidio National Historic District signs at the entrances to the neighborhood. JoAnne Rogers, Mary Lucking and Ilya Sloan have been working on a project to design and install historic district signs at all the streets entering the neighborhood, identifying El Presidio as a “National Historic District”. JoAnne and Mary have designed the signs using the colors mirroring the **Downtown Destinations** project colors which are being used to identify and lead the way into all the special places in the downtown area. (For El Presidio, they are using a dark red, with white letters.) Currently as you approach the downtown area, there are **Trailblazer signs** along the major thoroughfares such as St. Mary's, Congress, etc.. Ilya met with Kelly Ninez, sign supervisor for the City of Tucson, to determine exact placement and type of attachment needed. The City will install the signs above the existing street signs at Church and Franklin, Council, and Washington, Alameda and Court, and Main, Granada and

Paseo Redondo, Ashbury Lane, and Franklin. At the major intersections of Church and Alameda, Alameda and Granada, and Granada and 6<sup>th</sup>/St. Mary', larger markers are being designed and installed as part of **Downtown Destinations**, and will be handled by Chris Leighton from ParkWise. We will be working with K&K Signs who produce all the signs for **Downtown Destinations**. The signs will be funded with profits from **El Presidio Neighborhood's** Home Tour of this past spring, continuing a history of raising and using money from the tours to fund neighborhood projects. continuing a history of raising and using money from the tours to fund neighborhood projects.

Cheers, Ilya Sloan  
Historic District Signage Committee

**New “STABLES” Owners**

The 285-295 North Meyer Ave building was recently sold by El Presidio Properties (Bert Landau and Jan Bernardini) to a group of the shareholders of Mesch Clark & Rothschild, who also own MCR's office at 259 North Meyer. Jonathan Rothschild, one of the principals and the managing partner of Mesch Clark & Rothschild, indicated how pleased he was that the group was able to finalize the arrangements with Bert and Jan. “We shall be using some of the offices for our attorneys and staff.

The old adobe structure is an asset to the neighborhood and we intend to maintain its integrity.” Candy Canton, the Firm's Administrator, will be managing the building and can be reached at 624-8886.

Candace Thorne Canton  
Director of Administration  
Mesch, Clark & Rothschild, P.C.  
www.mcrazlaw.com  
<<http://www.mcrazlaw.com>>

## COPIES of "VOICES OF EI PRESIDIO" STILL AVAILABLE

As many of you are aware, EPNA and the El Presidio Historic Advisory Board have spent literally decades compiling oral histories from our residents. Recently, through generous support of the Southwest Center (and our own Joe Wilder), our oral history committee completed an extended compilation of those histories, with wonderful illustrations (provided through David Burkhalter, another neighbor). The compilation is available as a book, "Voices of El Presidio."

We are offering the book to members of the neighborhood at a reduced price of \$10 for the first copy and \$15 for each additional copy. Copies for non-residents are \$15.

The rest of the moneys collected will be added to EPNA's general fund for neighborhood improvements

We are all very proud of it and grateful to the committee and the Southwest Center for their hard work and dedication to create such a wonderful volume. We would also like to express our deep appreciation to all the neighbors who gave their histories so that our past can remain alive.

Copies can be viewed and purchased through Mary Helen Valdez, who lives at 234 N. Meyer, phone 623-9564. It is also for sale at Readers Oasis for \$15.

If you know of someone else who might like a copy, please forward this message.

—Margaret Hardy

## Presidio Terrace Lofts and Townhouses

"In it's own unique way Tucson is going to get vertical", says developer Peggy Noonan, who's development team, Presidio Terrace LLC was chosen by the City of Tucson to build lofts and condominiums at Main Street and Paseo Redondo in downtown.

The 49,000 square feet of vacant land adjacent to Tucson Water's headquarters and across from the Tucson Museum of Art will soon hold a 60-home residential development specially designed to reflect the history and unique character of the adjacent El Presidio neighborhood. Neighborhood-friendly commercial space and an attractive parking facility will also be part of the Presidio Terrace Project in this multi-level; terraced structure designed to portray Tucson's "sense of place".

When asked what is so special about the opportunity to build the Presidio Terrace project, Ms. Noonan is full of vision. "First of all, it is a chance to nurture the soul of Tucson which is it's downtown." In October 2002, recognizing that bringing people to live in downtown is vital to success of revitalization efforts, the Mayor and Council adopted a SMART Housing for downtown initiative. The initiative calls for the development of 2000 new housing units, offering a mix of housing types, costs, and locations in the downtown center and throughout 15 surrounding neighborhoods. This housing goal is woven into the City's overall Rio Nuevo downtown revitalization project, a \$120 million investment in commercial, cultural, entertainment, and civic development in downtown.

Presidio Terrace will be third large development on line, following the 200 unit mixed use project located on West Congress, *The Mercado District of Menlo Park*, and the sale of the Thrifty block for *The Post*, a 60 unit housing building with retail on the main floor right in the heart of downtown central. "I am happy to be part of the downtown pioneering on these larger housing projects," Noonan says.

Ms. Noonan, who has done development in larger cities, like New York, says, "I will transfer my experience from larger cities, but I will create very special spaces for Tucson residents, as opposed to the repetition of most new development." Presidio Terrace will offer a new style of living that gives a sense of spaciousness and volume, like true loft-style living. Along Main Avenue, there will be a series of row houses that will restore the now vacant streetscape to a vital part of the neighborhood."

Last year the City facilitated a planning process to determine project design principles to for development of the Presidio terrace site. The residential emphasis for this parcel is consistent with the La Entrada Planned Area Development adopted in 1982, and reiterated in the Rio Nuevo Downtown Revitalization Master Plan approved by Tucson voters in 1999.

Ms. Noonan's Presidio Terrace LLC team, made up of her own company Reliance Construction, Jim Gresham, of Gresham Beach Architects, and Bob Vint, of Vint & Associates Architects, beat out three other firms in a competitive process to win the project. "I think I have assembled the perfect team to do this project. The combined talent of Jim Gresham and Bob Vint will bridge the civic and residential uses surrounding the site, just like what was requested in the City's Request for Proposals (RFP)." According to Noonan, Jim Gresham has the perfect combination of design talent and experience to address the size and scale challenges associated with Presidio Terrace, including integration of a multi-level parking structure into a Tucson based design. The City's Water Building, the Tucson Museum of Art Fish-Stevens House, the nine-story Redondo Towers Apartment Building, and the smaller scale La Entrada Townhouses surround the site. Bob Vint possesses a keen understanding and sensibility of Tucson's history. This insight along with his affinity for the neighborhood will translate into a special project, Noonan says.

"You can't approach this thing as mechanical, you have to have some emotion, because there isn't anything in Tucson like what we are about to create."

EPNA Council Meetings are held at 7:00 P.M. on the second Monday of the month at HDR Johnson-Brittain (in the historic Owl's Club), 378 N. Main Avenue. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

*In this issue:*

**MeyerCourt Infill Project**

**New "Stables" Owners**

**Historic District Street Signage Project**

**Presidio Terrace Townhouses and Lofts**

**Wishing Peace and Joyous Holidays to All**

**2004 EPNA Officers**

**President –**

Margaret Hardy (792-6188)

**Vice President –**

David Hoyt Johnson (882-7058)

**Treasurer –**

Mary Helen Valdez (623-9564)

**Secretary –**

Justin geBraad (792-4224)

The City of Tucson, its officers, and employees, its Department of Neighborhood Resources, and all other offices neither agree nor disagree with views expressed or implied in this communication and are not responsible therefore; the distribution requestor is solely responsible.

Dated Material

EPNA QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER

Department of Neighborhood Resources  
P.O. Box 27210  
Tucson, AZ 85726-7210



PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TUCSON, AZ  
PERMIT # 426